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Your Reference: RAL/EP/P353125GB
Application No: GB0522255.9

3 January 2006

Dear Sirs

**Patents Act 1977:
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 and 18(3)**

Latest date for reply:

9 November 2006

I enclose two copies of my search and examination report and a copy of the citations.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

Other search results

If you have applied to another patent office for a patent for this invention you will be receiving from them the results of their search. If you decide to proceed with the present application you are asked to provide me with a copy of any such official search report; or to email identifying details of the cited documents (including any category assigned in the report) to the email address above.

Cut-off date This request applies to search reports that you have received before the date when you send a response to our first examination report under section 18(3) or section 18(4); if you make no response to an initial section 18(4) report the cut-off date is two months after the date of that report. Tell us about a search report sooner rather than later if that would allow it to be considered during our first examination.

[†]**Use of E-mail:** Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.

Exceptions You do not have to supply details of a search report that (1) shows a nil response, or (2) has been published by WIPO or EPO, or (3) you have already supplied to us on a previous GB application.

Publication

I estimate that, provided you have met all the formal requirements, preparations for publication of your application will be completed soon after **4 April 2006**. At this time you will receive a letter confirming the exact date when the preparations for publication will be completed. This letter will also tell you the publication number and date of publication of your application.

Withdrawal/amendment

If you wish to withdraw your application before it is published you must do so before the preparations for publication are complete. **WARNING** – after preparations for publication are complete it will NOT be possible to withdraw your application from publication.

If you wish to file amended claims for inclusion with the published application you must do so before the preparations for publication are completed. If you write to the Office less than 3 weeks before 4 April 2006 please mark your letter prominently:

"URGENT - PUBLICATION IMMINENT".

Yours faithfully



Monty Siddique
Examiner

Important information about combined search and examination

I also ask that you take note of the following points. These might have a bearing on the future stages of your application because the examination report has been sent to you before your application has been published.

- (a) You may file voluntary amendments before making a full response to my examination report. We will publish with your application any new or amended claims you file voluntarily or as a full response, provided that they are received before preparations for publication are completed. It would help us when you file amendments before publication if you could **prominently indicate** in a covering letter whether or not the amendments are intended as a full response to the examination report.
- (b) If you file a full response to the examination report before your application is published I will consider it as soon as possible. However, if this would disrupt the publication of your application, I would have to delay

taking any action until the application had been published. This delay could be up to 3 months, depending upon when we receive your response.

- (c) There is another situation when there might be a delay between you filing a full response and the Patent Office responding to it. This would arise if you met all my objections but your application had not or had only recently been published. I could not report the outcome of my re-examination until I was satisfied that the search was complete for documents published before the priority date of your invention and that anybody interested in the application has had three months following publication of the application to make observations on the patentability of your invention.
- (d) Provided that the requirements of the Act have been met, I can send your application to grant as early as three months after publication. Before doing so I will bring the original search up to date and raise with you any further objection that might result from this top-up search. However, there is a possibility that at that time I may not have access to all the patent applications published after the priority date of your invention and of possible relevance to your application. If this is the case I would have to complete the search after grant and if necessary raise any new found novelty objection then.

Application No: GB0522255.9

Examiner: Monty Siddique

Claims searched: 1-18

Date of search: 31 December 2005

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1, 5, 7, 8 at least	JP10291431 A (MITSUBOSHI BELTING LTD) see abstract and drawing; apparently one moulded substrate 5 connected to another moulded substrate 6 wherein, cushioning cover foamed layer 4 secured to at least one substrate
X	1, 4-6 at least	DE10104036 A1 (FINDLAY IND DEUT GMBH) first substrate 1 joined to second substrate 8, 8a and foamed cover 2, 3 supported on first substrate 1
X	1, 5, 6 at least	EP0408202 A2 (DAVIDSON TEXTRON INC) substrate 22 connected to substrate 14 through fastening means 32/34 via portions 28, 29 of the substrates; cover with flexible foam 16 supported on at least one of the substrates
X	1, 5 at least	JP11123999 A (KANSEI CORP) substrate 22 seemingly joined to substrate 23 and foamed resilient cover 27 supported on at least one of the substrates
X	1 at least	US5096221 A (DAVIDSON TEXTRON INC) first substrate 34 connected to a second substrate 40 and foamed cover 38 etc.

Categories:

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^X:

B5A; E1J

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁰⁷

B29C; B29D; B32B; B60J; B60R

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

WPI EPODOC

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Patents Act 1977

Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 & 18(3)

Inventive step

1. The invention as defined in claims 1, 4-8 at least is obvious in view of what has already been disclosed in the following documents:

JP10291431 A (MITSUBOSHI BELTING LTD) see abstract and drawing; apparently one moulded substrate 5 connected to another moulded substrate 6 wherein, cushioning cover foamed layer 4 secured to at least one substrate

DE10104036 A1 (FINDLAY IND DEUT GMBH) first substrate 1 joined to second substrate 8, 8a and foamed cover 2, 3 supported on first substrate 1

EP0408202 A2 (DAVIDSON TEXTRON INC) substrate 22 connected to substrate 14 through fastening means 32/34 via portions 28, 29 of the substrates; cover with flexible foam 16 supported on at least one of the substrates

JP11123999 A (KANSEI CORP) substrate 22 seemingly joined to substrate 23 and foamed resilient cover 27 supported on at least one of the substrates

US5096221 A (DAVIDSON TEXTRON INC) first substrate 34 connected to a second substrate 40 and foamed cover 38 etc.

The expression "automotive interior trim assembly" is regarded as one wide enough to encompass any moulded or semi-moulded assembly capable of being used as an interior fitting to a vehicle.

In the first of the Japanese documents, the substrate 6 appears to be formed in the mould, according to the drawing, and substrate is said, in the abstract, to be "formed" of thermoplastic resin, which suggests a moulding step.

In amending, it should be ensured that claims 1 and 7 are confined to the same invention.

Support

2. A support for the feature that the second material is also moulded, as defined at line 4 of claim 7, cannot be traced in the text.



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[Examination Report contd.]

3. A support for claim 11 cannot be traced in the text.

Clarity

4. The words “spirit and”, as used at lines 23, 24, 26 and 6 of pages 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively, should be removed, in order to avoid any ambiguities in the scope of the invention for which monopoly is sought.